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Flying Below the Radar: Civil Aviation Heritage in Australia's Northern Territory

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The first flight to arrive in the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia is surrounded by debate. Wrigley and Murphy landed in the Territory after flying from Point Cook in Victoria on 8th December 1919. Yet the location of this event remains unclear. Was it Alexandria Station or Avon Downs Station? And why was such an important event not well recorded? Perhaps it was overshadowed by the arrival of the Vickers Vimy and its crew on 10th December 1919 after they successfully completed the world's first Great Air Race from London to Darwin. The arrival of these aircraft highlighted their ability to fly long distances, and this must have impressed many Territorians and hinted at the potential for aviation in the Territory.¹



Arrival of the Great Air Race Vickers Vimy aircraft in Darwin (Image reproduced with permission from the Aviation Historical Society of the Northern Territory)

Other great aviators arrived throughout the 1920s and 1930s on their quest to break world records. The challenging and far-flung locations of the Territory now appeared within reach of settler colonial industries and development. Alongside industry, civilian services were established, including religious and medical, airmail and air cargo, passenger travel and recreational activities, which transformed remote lifestyles and generated opportunities for Territorians and their businesses.² The NT felt the negative impacts of the capabilities of aviation throughout World War II. Defence infrastructure relating to Japanese air raids remains visible today throughout the Top End of the NT, with World War II runways remaining alongside the Stuart Highway, the major road that links Darwin with Katherine. The use of both civil and military aircraft after Cyclone Tracy generated an appreciation of the positive impacts of aviation. In December 1974, as part of the evacuation of Darwin after the cyclone, Qantas Pilot, Donn Howe, flew 674 passengers and 23 crew from Darwin to Sydney. It was the largest number of people aboard a Boeing 747 and was part of the huge effort to evacuate over 30,000 people safely and quickly.³

Aviation continues to play a vital role in the lives of Territorians today. The Australian military, including Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) squadrons, maintains a noticeable presence in the region. Examples include RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal, Larrakeyah/HMAS Coonawarra, Robertson Barracks, Defence Establishment Berrimah, NORFORCE (North-West Mobile Force) Alice Springs, Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap, and Mount Bunday and Bradshaw Field Training Areas. Everyday civil aviation flights ensure remote communities are accessible and include scheduled flights by commercial operators, like Air North, as well as chartered flights for construction, mining, rescue and medical. However, despite a century of civil aviation and its impact on development and society, especially between the 1920s and 1980s, there are few written histories, and it appears that little remains of its physical past. On the other hand, military aviation is well recorded and well represented in the Territory's heritage institutions.

The impression that defence narratives are more prominent would benefit from rigorous investigation.⁴ The aim of this paper is to explore this claim through an audit of heritage places and collections, alongside the investigation of primary and secondary historical sources and current ways in which civil aviation heritage is portrayed in the Territory. This research therefore aims to identify gaps and trends in the way civil aviation heritage is portrayed in the Territory and suggests ways in which this history and heritage could be better understood and presented to the public.

Histories of Civil Aviation in the Northern Territory

The recent literature produced on NT history and heritage is diverse. Awards for history grants have focused on significant individuals, sporting groups, Indigenous people and the military. Recent editions of *Northern Territory Historical Studies* have seen a similar focus with work on individuals such as Lieutenant Robert Oestreicher, World War II pilot (Powell), Namarluk, Aboriginal man (Ivory) and Sergeant James 'Jim' Bowditch, Australian soldier in World War II and editor of the *Northern Territory News* (Powell) and on the different cultures present throughout NT history including Indigenous, Chinese, European and Japanese.⁵ Due to the recent centenary the 2020 edition includes an article on the Great Air Race.⁶ The theme of biographies is also evident in published books available through the NT Historical Society such as Buffalo Johnny (Overall), Bert Nixon (Cameron) and John Anderson Gilruth (Egan).⁷

In recent years such histories have also focused on specific families who made an impact on the NT and the people who live there. Titles include Derrick's *Sheer Hard Work and Plenty of Guts: The Farrar Family of the Northern Territory*, Bisa's *Remember Me Kindly: A History of the Holtze Family in the Northern Territory* and Cadogan's *The Book of Harry, Eric and Bronte*.⁸

Most of the earlier historical texts, like those by Lockwood, Parsons and Price, relate NT settler colonial history with a focus on the intertwined themes of isolation, distance, and failure. For example, Lockwood's chronological history details the settlement of Darwin, from the first few attempts and their failures.²

Price also wrote a chronological history of the region, divided into two distinct time periods. The first encompasses 1870 to 1889, a time that Price describes as a period of ‘booms’ and ‘excitement’ because of the perceived possibilities the region could provide. He contrasts this era with the period 1890 to 1910, which he describes as a time when the NT stagnated and awaited Commonwealth administration.¹⁰ Parsons headed a Government inquiry into the settlement of the Territory and its difficulties for the South Australian administration.¹¹

After the introduction of aviation, there was less emphasis on the difficulties of settlement, frontier themes and failures in later histories of the region. Grant saw the need for the Territory to be more connected and argued rail would be the best approach. However, he does state that, due to World War II defence efforts, the construction of roads provided some relief to the issues of isolation and distance, which promoted successful ‘frontier settlement’.¹² Carment, Gunn and the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT (MAGNT) all acknowledge that the administration of the NT and lifestyle of settler Territorians were hindered by isolation due to its expansive size and challenging climate and landscape.¹³

The written narratives of civil aviation in the Territory include both primary and secondary sources. For this article, they have been divided into three categories: chronological, thematic/event specific and biographies.

Chronological

There are only a few examples of this type of history specifically regarding civil aviation in the NT. *North of Capricorn* published by the Department of Civil Aviation in 1987 is a short book dedicated to aviation related events which also highlights the impact of aviation in the Top End.¹⁴ Vic Pedersen, the best known NT Flying Padre, wrote a history covering three-decades of the Salvation Army’s Flying Padre Service in northern Australia from 1944 to 1974.¹⁵ Edward Connellan, pioneering aviator and founder of Connellan Airways (later Connair), wrote an unofficial and unpublished short history of civil aviation up to the late 1970s as it expanded throughout the Territory. It was not written strictly chronologically but rather through a series of events Connellan witnessed or knew about. The stories are anecdotal and unlikely to be included in an official history as they often relate to adventures and fun had by friends, such as the shorting of a control column so that it gave the pilot a small electric shock whilst flying, or unhelpful advice regarding oil leaks from aircraft prior to World War II.¹⁶

More recently, local historians Peter and Shelia Forrest published a history of aviation in the Territory at the request of Airports NT.¹⁷ It focuses on specific events with images to accompany the stories. Unlike



Vic Pedersen standing next to his Flying Padre aircraft
(Courtesy of the Salvation Army Australia Museum)

previous texts, it includes historic timelines. Several stories include people made famous by aviation like that of the 'Koepang Kid' (Bas Wie)¹⁸ who created national headlines in Australia after he was found unconscious in the upper part of the undercarriage of a DC-3 after stowing away on a flight from West Timor, Indonesia.

Thematic and Event Specific Histories

Thematic and event specific histories are arguably the most common type of history written about aviation in the Territory. Most focus on World War II and the Bombing of Darwin. As the emphasis in this article is on civil aviation, it is significant to note that many pilots who flew in World War II, in either the NT or Papua New Guinea, also flew in both locations as civilian pilots before and/or after their war service. Sam Calder, Vic Pedersen, Clyde Fenton and others flew for the RAAF or were involved in the defence of Darwin from a civilian perspective. Edward Connellan ran charters for the Defence Department during the war.¹⁹ It appears that the climate, challenging landscape, remoteness and relaxed nature of communities in both locations encouraged pilots like Eileen Steenson, charter pilot in the NT and PNG, to remain in the region.²⁰

Other event histories include *14,000 Miles through the Air*,²¹ which is the first of a growing number of books to be written about the first Great Air Race to celebrate the centenary of its arrival in Darwin in 1919.²² Territory authors have written about other niche subjects. Bob Alford wrote a history of civil aviation in Katherine. Pearl Ogden wrote a history on mustering and helicopters. And Shirley Brown recorded interviews with Centralians (locals to central Australia) about the development of central Australia.²³



Pamphlet of the Connellan Airways Mail Routes
(Aviation Historical Society of the Northern Territory)

The theme of providing services – rescue, medical and spiritual – is widely recorded. Civil aviation enabled medical emergencies to be attended in a shorter time, whilst also enabling supplies and news from major hubs around Australia. Organisations like the Salvation Army and Milingimbi Historical Society wrote of these services as did three former Flying Padres who have published books on their experiences. Pedersen and Parker wrote of their time with the Salvation Army Flying Padre unit. Langford Smith recorded his experiences and adventures whilst flying in and out of a remotely based mission in the NT.²⁴ Dr Clyde Fenton emphasised the importance of being able to attend an emergency at any time. It was for this reason that he practiced flying at night when there was a full moon.²⁵ Buchanan highlights the importance of air mail routes for Territory stations and communities in his biography of Sam Calder.²⁶ However, this diversity of experiences and historical actors can be obscured in public memory by the current focus on the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Of other services made possible by aviation, little is written about the firebombing and firefighting aircraft utilised even today across the Territory. It is also surprising that the subject of Fly In, Fly Out (FIFO) mining work and farming aviation, so important to the Territory's economy, have not been formally researched. Nor have the delivery of passengers, cargo and supplies to remote communities or recreational flying and the aircraft that undertook these activities.²⁷

Memoirs, Autobiographies and Biographies

The third type of history written about NT civil aviation are those that focus on specific individuals. These take the form of autobiographies and biographies and include texts about well-known aviators, like Charles Eaton and Sam Calder, as well as memoirs, like those of Edward Connellan, Keith Langford Smith and Clyde Fenton.²⁸ These biographies tend to focus on the period when aviation was a significant aspect of the subject's life. They are important as they include stories that were unlikely to be recorded officially due to the everyday nature of events involved. Yet they had a lasting impact on the NT, its development and its people.

In each of these three categories of written history, the dominating focus remains largely on the stories of European males. Thus, a key gap in understanding NT civil aviation history relates to the broader social histories of the Territory's ethnically diverse communities and the experiences of women and Indigenous communities.²⁹ An exception is Black's 2019 article 'Clearing Country and Opening the Skies: Aboriginal Workers and the Australian Aviation Industry'.

Other Narratives of Civil Aviation in the Northern Territory

The written record is not the only way in which historical narratives can be conveyed and distributed. Other ways in which the public can engage with the past include films, tours and public talks or presentations.

Prompted by the death of local legend Vic Pedersen, the ABC produced two short documentaries on the Salvation Army Flying Padres in 2002 and 2008.³⁰ In 2008, Baz Luhrmann directed *Australia*, a major historical movie set in the NT. Aviation featured mainly in relation to the Bombing of Darwin, which was recreated in graphic detail. In 2016, a reality television program, *Outback Pilots*, was released. Whilst not historical, it was an observational documentary focusing on pilots flying to remote areas in the Territory.³¹ In 2019 Exposure Productions, commissioned by NT Airports, produced the documentary *The Sweet Note of the Engine* to celebrate their anniversary and the centenary of the Great Air Race of 1919.³² It focused on material locals could relate to, like that of well-known identities or little known locations and events, and presented a short history of civil aviation and its impact in the Territory.³³

Like the heritage institutions and the literature, the above listed films focus mainly on significant but already well-known aviation events and identities. However, in some respects, the ABC documentary on Pedersen and the NT Airports documentary touch on previously untold stories.

Historical tours that include aviation in the Darwin region relate mainly to defence during World War II.³⁴ They are available as either self-guided, specialised defence of Darwin tours or broad range tours, which include the defence of Darwin story.³⁵ There are currently none relating specifically to the civil aviation story. However, when discussing the matter with ‘Walk Darwin’ owner John Hart, he noted that the generic tours could include a visit to the Darwin Aviation Museum (DAM) and, therefore, civil aviation stories could be experienced. He also stated that historical aviation sites were occasionally mentioned to tourists during tours.³⁶

The two other tourist hubs in the Territory are Alice Springs and Katherine. If the Katherine Museum is visited, then the story of Clyde Fenton – the Territory’s first Flying Doctor – is likely to be experienced.³⁷ In Alice Springs, the Central Australian Aviation Museum offers visitors the opportunity to explore several civil aviation stories including the story of the Kookaburra crash.³⁸

In the Darwin region, the NT Archives and Library organisation host a series of public talks at least once a month throughout the year. Although they cover a broad range of topics, until recently they have not included any mention of civil aviation. In 2019, on behalf of DAM, Ken Lai, Fiona Douglas and I presented five talks in relation to the 1919 Great Air Race centenary.³⁹ The fact that the public is interested in civil aviation heritage was reflected by the high attendance at these talks. All were booked out with over 100 people present. Usually, most history talks in the Darwin region attract approximately 40 to 50 people.⁴⁰



Two of the three presenters, Ken Lai and the author, for the Great Air Race talks in the second half of 2019 (The author, 2019)

Steve Farram of Charles Darwin University hosts an annual Darwin History Colloquium in the NT State Library.⁴¹ The talks at this event are also not specifically related to civil aviation. But recently they have included at least one talk on this topic. In 2019, I presented a short history of ultralight aircraft in the Darwin region and, in October 2020, I presented a paper on the Flying Padres. In May 2021, as part of National Archaeology Week, DAM hosted a public history talk on aviation archaeology.

Government funding plays a crucial role in the presentation of heritage for the broader community throughout Australia. Each year the NT Government funds aviation heritage events, which include the Bombing of Darwin, Anzac Day, Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day commemorations and the anniversary of the 1919 Great Air Race. Only twenty-five percent of these events are civil aviation heritage focused. Each year, DAM hosts an Open Cockpit Day to encourage people to attend the museum and engage with the

aviation heritage of the Territory. While Northern Territory Government funding is available for heritage listed sites, a significant proportion of funding goes to military sites.

Heritage Audit

Current heritage collections and heritage listed places were investigated from May 2019 to May 2020 to establish a baseline from which to assess and compare the representation of military and civil aviation heritage within the NT. The audit recorded only physical heritage objects, places and public collections. Private collections were not included to ensure that the audit was manageable within my time frame. Heritage institutions, historical societies and heritage registers were investigated. (See [Table 1](#).)

A total of 54 objects and places relating to aviation were recorded in the NT Heritage Register, of which 78% related to defence. Civil aviation objects and places include VH – CLW Heron Aircraft, Alice Springs; Qantas/New Guinea Airways Hangar, Darwin; Ross Smith Memorial, Darwin; former Katherine Airport; Connellan Hangar, Alice Springs; John Flynn Memorial Church, Alice Springs; the John Flynn Grace Historic Reserve; and Flynn Victoria Hotel – ‘The Vic’ – Darwin. The Vic was the only hotel where early aviators could stay when they arrived. The Daly Waters Aviation Complex and 7 Mile Aerodrome Alice Springs, both of which relate to both civil and defence uses, were also included.

Table 1. List of Resources Approached for Data during the Heritage Audit

Collecting Institutions	Data Available	Historical Societies	Data Available	Heritage Place Registers	Data Available
Central Australian Aviation Museum	Yes	Aviation Historical Society of the Northern Territory	Yes, via Darwin Aviation Museum	Northern Territory Heritage Register	Yes
Darwin Aviation Museum	Yes	Fannie Bay History and Heritage Society	No	National Heritage Listed Sites Register	Yes
Darwin Military Museum	Yes			Northern Territory National Trust Register	Yes
Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory	No			National Estate Archive (closed 2007)	Yes
Royal Flying Doctor Service Tourist Facility	No				
Katherine Museum	Yes				

A major issue for this study is the destruction of physical objects and their associated documentation through two major events: the Bombing of Darwin (1942) and Cyclone Tracy (1974). Furthermore, materials from which early civil aviation objects were constructed are not conducive to preservation in northern Australia's harsh climate. The lack of a heritage policy in the NT until 1991 saw objects acquired by institutions in other states and removed for display in the south.⁴² An example of this is the first Tiger Moth flown by the Flying Padre Vic Pedersen, the first and most famous Flying Padre for the Salvation Army in Australia. This aircraft crashed in 1946 and, when the wreck was rediscovered in 2007, it was sent to the Salvation Army Museum in Melbourne.⁴³ Another issue for my study was that, for various reasons including the COVID-19 pandemic, not all collections listed above were available for audit.

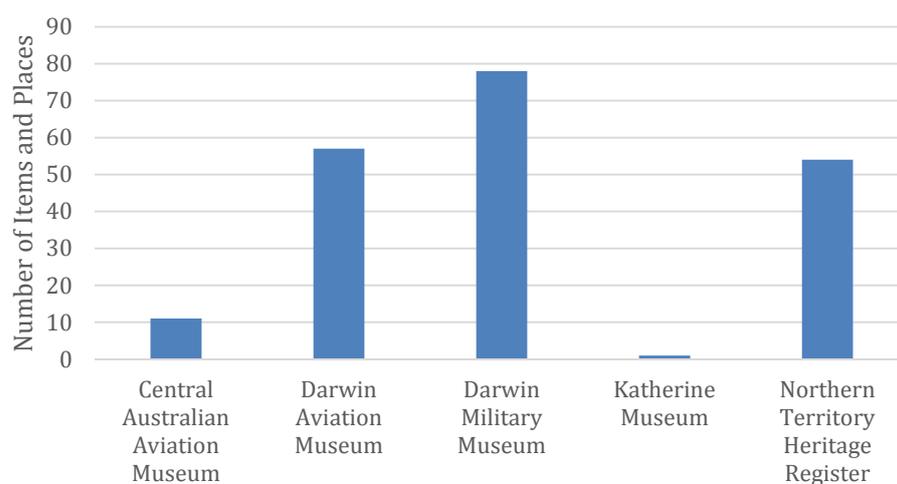


Figure 1. Heritage Audit by NT Heritage Institution

Note: The Central Australian Aviation Museum was the only heritage institution that contained only civil aviation objects.

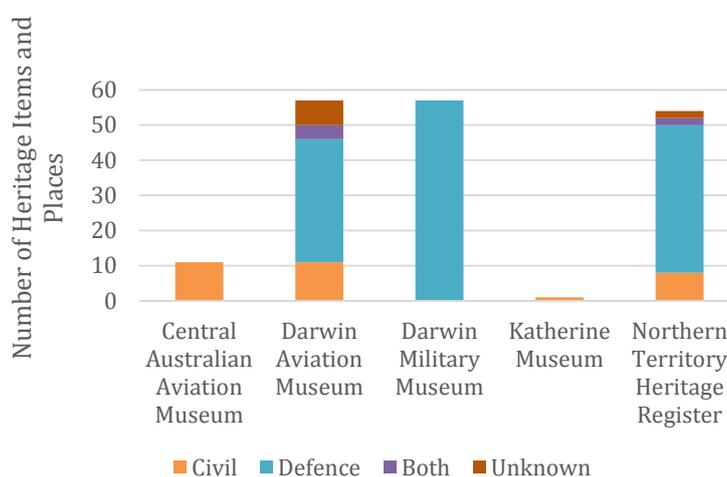


Figure 2. Heritage Audit by Category

Thirty of the 200 aviation related objects and places listed in the heritage audit are specifically related to civil aviation. Defence-related materials account for 77.5% of the entire audit, with six items (3%) relating to both civil and defence use. Nine items (4.5%) have no known provenance or recorded history and therefore they were unable to be differentiated. (See [Figure 2.](#))

Discussion

The results of the audit confirms that most aviation collections and heritage places are defence related. Yet the audit needs to be considered in relation to several other factors such as the current state of various heritage institution catalogues and their ability to share their data. With a complete catalogue from the AHSNT or MAGNT the results may have differed and this is a potential study for the future.

That defence accounted for more than three quarters of the heritage items suggests strongly that those who collected aviation materials or nominated aviation heritage sites thought that defence history and heritage was more important than civil aviation. DMM and DAM were both formed (initially) to preserve military objects. Since then, DAM and the associated AHSNT have expanded their aims and objectives to include civil aviation objects, history and heritage in their displays. Yet, its limited catalogue is still defence oriented. The 54 sites and objects on the NT Heritage Register list all nominations (including those rejected after assessment by the Heritage branch). The overwhelming number of defence related nominations supports the argument that aviation defence materials and sites are considered more important than civil. This may be because more defence objects are collected and conserved, more has been written about World War II and the Bombing of Darwin, and more films, tours and public talks have focussed on those events to the exclusion of civil aviation events.

Apart from loss and destruction, this under-representation of civil aviation objects is in part due to government funding that prioritises military heritage – note the current \$500 million expansion of the Australian War Memorial – and the spending of large amounts of funding on Anzac commemorations. Governments are also less likely to fund collections based on private airlines, other companies or charitable groups. This situation also reflects the focus on certain popular subjects by collecting institutions.⁴⁴ For example, the AHSNT opened DAM with the initial aim of preserving the history and memorabilia of World War II. The Royal Flying Doctor Tourist Facility specifically focuses its collection on the stories and objects that relate directly to its aim of showcasing two iconic Territory stories, the Royal Doctor Flying Service and the Bombing of Darwin. And finally, DMM focuses on objects and displays relating solely to the NT's defence history and heritage.

Many historians in the past few decades have explored the influence of military history on cultural identity and memory in Australia, with a particular focus on Anzac.⁴⁵ In 1967, Geoffrey Serle first expressed the term 'Anzackery' but does not go into his meaning behind the word.⁴⁶ However, others since then have attempted to define it. The Australian National University defines Anzackery as 'the use and promotion of the Anzac legend, especially in ways seen to be excessive or misguided'.⁴⁷ The Australia Defence Association acknowledges the definition continues to evolve and argues one of the uses of the term can be 'hyperbolic rhetoric extolling the supposed place of Anzac in history'.⁴⁸

The results of a survey conducted by Donoghue and Tranter (2015) into the Anzac identity and Australian identity found that 90% of Australians associated with the two identities. Additionally, a Department of Veterans Affairs report found that Australian characteristics are seen to come from the Australian military.⁴⁹ An example of the recent increased interest in the Anzac story is the 2015 commemoration of World War I. Prior to the event, it was believed that all Australian battlefield tour companies were fully booked and therefore it was possible that it would result in the largest ever peacetime gatherings of Australians in one location, outside of Australia.⁵⁰

The advent of recent Australian military commemorations (centenary of World War I and 75th anniversary of World War II) has provided an opportunity for Anzac stories to reach the Australian public. It was during this time that authors like Peter FitzSimons had great success with populist books like

Gallipoli.⁵¹ Whilst not all these examples and anniversaries relate to events that involve aviation in wartime, they do demonstrate that defence related activities and histories have been pushed to the fore of people's awareness in relation to the Australian identity, heritage and history and occupy a prominent role in public history narratives.

The opening of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Bombing of Darwin Tourist Facility in Darwin further supports the idea of the historic military influence on the Territory identity. Additionally, the presence of the RAAF and other defence forces in the NT has made many Territorians aware of northern Australia's military history through their employment as defence personnel working in catering, construction, youth programs and transport. The runway infrastructure and associated heritage signage remaining alongside the Stuart Highway serve as a physical reminder to both locals and tourists of World War II aviation stories. Yet, the good attendance at the 2019 civil aviation heritage talks, based around the 1919 Great Air Race, demonstrates that there is a public demand for civil aviation histories to be explored and shared.⁵²

Although civil aviation histories relate mostly to individual experiences, they do tell the civil aviation story more fully. The Flying Doctors, Padres and commercial pilots all write about an industry that made possible what was previously an almost insurmountable challenge. Medical and spiritual assistance was now within reach and the ability to travel or transport mail and cargo in a timely manner across the vast and remote terrain of the NT was now possible. But despite these events having a profound impact on the people and development of the Territory, today they seem routine, and the history and heritage of civil aviation are little understood. On the other hand, defence related narratives, like those of World War II, retain the greatest hold on the public imagination.⁵³

Conclusion

This article has highlighted that the aviation story in the NT is focused on defence. Several significant areas of civil aviation are absent from the narrative, both physical and in written and other forms. Civil aviation continues to play a vital role in the lives of Territorians. Yet these other stories of aviation, although significant, are seldom represented in museums, discussed on public tours or at seminars and little is written about them in Territory histories. It is hoped that this research will create an awareness of the gaps in the civil aviation story and promote discussion in organisations and public forums that have an interest in Territory heritage. Once these gaps are recognised, then steps can be taken to ensure these important stories are not forgotten.

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34. Tourism NT 2021, *History and Heritage* (Online). Available: <https://northernterritory.com/things-to-do/history-and-heritage> [Accessed 1 July 2021].
35. This conclusion was made after discussions with various historical tour guide companies and investigating the Tourism NT 2021, (Online). Available: <https://northernterritory.com/tours/history-and-heritage> (Accessed 1 July 2021).
36. John Hart pers comm, 2020.
37. The Katherine Museum 2019-2020, *Collections* (Online). Available: <http://www.katherinemuseum.com/the-museum/collections> [Accessed 1 July 2021]. I was also advised by the Manager of the Museum via email whilst undertaking an aviation heritage audit between May 2019 and May 2020.
38. Central Australian Aviation Museum 2021, *Westland Widgeon 111 'Kookaburra'* (Online). Available: <https://centralaustralianaviationmuseum.org.au/exhibit/westland-widgeon-111-kookaburra> [Accessed 1 July 2021]. I also viewed it in person in November 2019. The Kookaburra was flown by Keith Anderson and Bobby Hitchcock to locate Charles Kingsford Smith who was reported missing in 1929. The Kookaburra experienced engine issues and both men died after they were forced to land in the Tanami Desert. The Kookaburra was not located until 1978 and is now displayed in the Central Aviation Museum in Alice Springs.
39. I was one of three presenters involved in this series of talks in 2019. Further information from Library & Archives NT 2019, *Celebrating the Centenary of the Great Air Race* (Online). Available: <https://ntl.nt.gov.au/announcement/celebrating-centenary-great-air-race> [Accessed 1 July 2021].
40. These attendance numbers are known to the author through attending a number of these events, as well as discussions with staff at the Northern Territory Library and Archives.
41. Charles Darwin University 2019, *Annual History Colloquium* (Online). Available: <https://www.cdu.edu.au/events/annual-history-colloquium> [Accessed: 5 August 2019]. This information is known to the author due to her involvement in the past few years.
42. Anita Angel, 'Collecting and exhibiting the Northern Territory: Retracing a museum history on the frontier from pre-Federation to the early twentieth century', in Lesley Mearns and Leith Barter (eds), *Progressing Backwards: The Northern Territory in 1901*, Historical Society of the Northern Territory, Darwin, 2002, pp115-158.
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44. An example of this focus on very specific aviation themes and stories is discussed in Shanahan, *On a wing and a prayer*, op cit.

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49. Jed Donoghue and Bruce Tranter, 'The Anzacs: Military influences on Australian identity', *Journal of Sociology*, vol 51, no 3, 2015, pp445; 453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783312473669>
50. Jim McKay, 'A critique of the militarisation of Australian history and culture thesis: The case of Anzac battlefield tourism', *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, vol 10, no 1, 2013, p1. <https://doi.org/10.5130/portal.v10i1.2371>
51. Alistair Thomson, op cit, p521.
52. Examples of Flying Padres who flew in the NT but were not associated with the Salvation Army include Ron Watts (Mission Aviation Fellowship), Keith Langford Smith (Church Mission Society) and Ray Shepherd. This is not an extensive list but it does demonstrate that there are Flying Padres working within the Territory region who are not acknowledged.
53. This statement is supported by discussions had with locals recently in regard to the fire fighting aircraft and helicopters. Those whom I spoke to knew little about the service provided by the aircraft and the danger and challenges faced by the pilots. Yet once they have seen them in action (in person), they have a greater appreciation of the work undertaken by the pilots and they begin to search out more information about them.